



## OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING Victorville, CA 92395

February 10, 2017

**STAFF REPORT:** Interpretation and Outreach Program

**STAFF:** Donna McGuire, Interpretation and Outreach Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** 2016 Interpretation and Outreach Program Report

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### Summary

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division provides an active and comprehensive statewide Education, Interpretation, and Outreach Program. The year 2016 proved to be successful in reaching a broad, diverse audience with interpretive programs that offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about safe, lawful off-highway vehicle (OHV) operation, and responsible environmental stewardship.

### Discussion

The Division's Education, Interpretation and Outreach Program supports all six goals of the OHMVR Division's Strategic Plan and specifically addresses Goal 4 which is to develop an informed and educated community associated with OHV operation. The 2015 Interpretation and Outreach Report focused on programs for underserved youth who may not have exposure to State Parks and adult audiences who may be less aware of the Division's commitment to well-managed recreational lands. The 2016 report will cover programs offered by the State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs) and the Division's Headquarters outreach team that are back to the basics of educating the public about safe, lawful OHV recreation, and resource protection. The OHMVR Division statewide interpreters and volunteers offer a broad spectrum of education and interpretation programs to engage visitors in active learning about the unique natural and cultural resources as well as safe and responsible OHV recreation.

The staff at Heber Dunes SVRA greeted the 2016 New Year with a Second Day Family Ride that combines safety training with land stewardship principles. The ride was part of Heber Dune's monthly all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety classes and had seven enthusiastic participants. Heber Dune's ATV Safety Institute (ASI) instructor, Jim Rue, put the participants' newly acquired riding skills to the



test as they rode up and down dunes, on trails, and in open riding areas. Along the way, Jim provided information to create awareness about animal habitats and shared recreational tips of how to enjoy the ride while taking care of the environment. It was a great way to begin the new year.



The ATV safety simulator program is a prime example of addressing the Division's education goals to promote safety and resource protection. After participants learn about safety gear by matching the correct rubber stamp to eight different riddles, they put on a helmet, goggles, and gloves, mount the ATV to learn about proper machine size, and then apply active rider techniques during a simulated ride that includes messages about staying on the trail and respecting others. At the end of the ride, parents and young riders hear about the Division's free hands-on ATV safety training course offered at many SVRAs for youth ages 6-17. To reinforce program concepts and

as an extension activity, people of all ages have the option of playing the engaging Ride Safe computer kiosk games.

Another hands-on popular program is the Remote Control (R/C) Jeep program that teaches the five Tread Lightly! principles of responsible recreational practices. Interpretive staff developed various obstacle course formats to address different programmatic needs. Whenever possible, the obstacle course is constructed of natural materials, such as during King of the Hammers, Hangtown Motocross Classic, and Cantina for the Con. During the annual First Day Ride Festival on January 1, 2016, Ocotillo Wells SVRA unveiled a permanent R/C Jeep challenge course near the Discovery Center. Participants crawl over "boulders," climb up "mountains," while applying the Tread Lightly! principles and exhibiting safe "riding" behavior. During outreach settings without available natural materials, such as fairgrounds, staff developed portable courses. The Division Headquarters outreach team has a roll-out carpet with a painted trail, man-made obstacles, and props to teach the Tread Lightly! principles. Oceano Dunes SVRA staff developed a portable interpretive R/C course made of plywood, cardboard, and papier-mâché that resembles a ride through the dunes to use at marketing and outreach events. Whatever the format, the R/C Jeep program is a big hit with kids and their parents who appreciate a program that encourages responsible behavior.



Most of the SVRAs offer a Junior Ranger Program to help kids understand about the resources, why we protect them, and what they can do now for future generations. Hungry Valley SVRA provides an eight week Junior Ranger Club to the children of the community. By partnering with the Frazier Park Library and the Boys and Girls Club, the park is able to offer a spring and summer club. The programs introduce the kids to the flora and fauna found in the park, and also focus on safety. The children learn the importance of wearing the proper riding apparel through safety games and activities that teach the Tread Lightly! principles. The Boys and Girls Club session culminates in a field trip to the park with a scavenger hunt, hike, and graduation celebration at the amphitheater. The Library session ends with a graduation celebration at the county park. The next day the Junior Rangers joined Hungry Valley staff in the parade to kick off Fiesta Days. This successful program has been well received in the community and helps promote stewardship in the local community while emphasizing responsible recreation.



As part of creating a sustainable future for Prairie City SVRA, staff is developing its own Junior Ranger OHV Program. During the first phase of development, staff introduced a self-guided Junior Ranger booklet with activities related to recreating safely, appreciation of cultural and natural resources, and an emphasis on water quality. When the park rolled out its first 10 booklets, they were gone in a flash. The kids loved them, and parents were surprised that there were activity learning booklets especially developed about Prairie City for their child to become an OHV Junior Ranger. The booklet will soon be available on the Prairie City SVRA website, and staff is excited about developing future programs for youth at the park.



To create a greater depth of understanding to protect cultural resources, Hollister Hills SVRA staff began to regularly schedule the Junior Archaeology Program in its lineup of activities offered to the public during the weekends. Participants get a firsthand experience of digging in their own “archaeological” site in wooden boxes to discover items in three different layers or periods of history. Each period contains specific items, which help the participants identify the modern day OHV park, historic westward expansion with the gold

rush era, and the pre-historic Native American period. The participants are excited to find items in their mini site and learn how they relate to Hollister Hills SVRA. With this hands-on discovery activity, participants understand the importance of protecting sensitive cultural resources for the future.



To comply with the mandated public education requirement under Carnegie's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Permit through the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (to reduce or eliminate pollutant discharges and to meet the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and the Clean Water Act), a brochure and a series of interpretive panels are provided to explain pollutants in the park and their detrimental impact on wildlife, water quality, and public health, and what visitors can do to protect water quality.

The interpretive program at Clay Pit SVRA promotes sustainable off-highway recreation by educating visitors on safe and responsible recreational practices. Visitors learn about wildlife, vegetation, history of the park, and why it's important to protect the park's natural and cultural resources through hands-on interpretive programs and non-personal interpretation. By following principles of recreating safely and responsibly, park visitors will allow future generations to enjoy Clay Pit SVRA.

At the Eastern Kern County, Onyx Ranch SVRA, the San Andreas District installed orientation kiosks at key destinations, staging areas, and along major travel routes to inform visitors about the SVRA boundaries, regulations, and other pertinent information.



The OHMVR Division statewide OHV law enforcement program has several funded Pacific Crest Trail kiosks that are installed in and around the SVRA. Interpretive content describes local plant and animal species, conservation messaging, and clearly shows areas where OHV riding is allowed and/or prohibited. In partnership with the OHMVR Division, the Friends of Jawbone and the California Trail User Coalition offer recreational maps that include motorized trails and information about Eastern Kern County, Onyx Ranch SVRA. The combined outreach efforts educate the public about legal areas for OHV recreation and information to appreciate and protect the resources at the newest SVRA.

As an outreach strategy to reach teens, the OHMVR Division continued its partnership for the second year with the *SportStars Magazine* that is marketed to youth and their parents. The Division publishes a monthly article and ad. Of the twelve articles published in 2016, topics included ATV safety and training, the health benefits of dirt bike riding, and the success of a nine year old girl who competes in motocross racing. The ad promotes visitation to the SVRAs and includes the Division's web address and hyperlink in the online version of the magazine for subscribers to learn how to recreate safely and responsibly. With a distribution of 300,000 print copies to school libraries and other locations throughout California and an additional 150,000 online subscribers, *SportStars Magazine* is a valuable communication tool to reach teens.

In May 2016, Division and SVRA interpretive staff joined together for OHV Interpretation Training at Prairie City SVRA. During the training, interpreters shared program ideas, best practices, interpretative techniques effective with the OHV audience, innovative technology to enhance interpretive programs, and completed Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle (ROV) and trailer towing training. In addition, the Deputy Director of the National Association of Interpretation provided two days of training on interpretive graphic design

and social media interpretation. For an off-site learning experience, staff toured the Snell Memorial Foundation, the world's leader in testing safety helmets located in the Sacramento area, and learned about the science of the safety helmet to best explain the importance of wearing a safety helmet to the public.



The OHMVR Division's statewide education, interpretation, and outreach program proved to be highly successful during 2016 serving more than 189,000 people. With dedicated, professional staff working together and with partnerships, thousands of people now have the knowledge to do at least one action that may help keep them safe and protect our environment. The Division looks forward to future collaborations to educate the OHV community and the general public about safe, lawful, and responsible OHV operation in order to continue high quality recreational opportunities in the state of California.

Unit	Venue/Event Resulting in Most Contacts	2016 Total Interpretive Contacts
Heber Dunes SVRA	Imperial County Mid- Winter Fair & Festival	5,281
Ocotillo Wells SVRA	In-Park Interpretive Exhibits & Programs	55,351
Hungry Valley SVRA	Fiesta Days	3,056
Oceano Dunes SVRA	Talks and Walks	54,167
Hollister Hills SVRA	Hollister Motorcycle Rally	15,248
Carnegie SVRA	Visitor Appreciation	2,645

	Day	
Prairie City SVRA	Hangtown Motocross Classic	6,409
Clay Pit SVRA	Visitor Appreciation Day	1,613
OHMVR Division HQ	Sacramento County Fair	45,587
Total Statewide 2016 Interpretive Contacts:		189,357

**Commission Action**

For information only.

**Attachments**

None